

106TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. CON. RES. 214

Expressing the sense of Congress that direct systematic phonics instruction should be used in all schools.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 28, 1999

Mr. McINTOSH submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of Congress that direct systematic phonics instruction should be used in all schools.

Whereas the ability to read the English language with fluency and comprehension is essential if individuals are to reach their full potential;

Whereas it is a foundational and indisputable fact that written English is based on the alphabetic principle, and is, in fact, a phonetic language;

Whereas more than 50 years of cognitive science, neuroscience, and applied linguistics have confirmed that learning to read is a skill that must be taught in a direct, systematic way;

Whereas phonics instruction is the teaching of a body of knowledge consisting of 26 letters of the alphabet, the 44

English speech sounds they represent, and the 70 most common spellings for those speech sounds;

Whereas most public schools, teachers colleges, and universities do not provide direct, systematic phonics instruction;

Whereas the 1998 National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) has found that 69 percent of 4th grade students are reading below the proficient level;

Whereas more than half of the students being placed in special education programs have not been taught to read;

Whereas the cost of special education, at the Federal, State, and local levels exceeds \$60,000,000,000 each year;

Whereas the 1998 NAEP also found that 85 percent of minority 4th grade students, most of whom are in title I programs (of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.)), are reading below the proficient level;

Whereas Congress has spent more than \$120,000,000,000 over the past 30 years for title I programs (of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.)) alone with the primary purpose of improving reading skills;

Whereas the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) has conducted more than 35 years of extensive scientific research in reading at a cost of more than \$200,000,000;

Whereas the NICHD findings on reading instruction conclude that phonemic awareness, direct, systematic instruction in sound-spelling correspondences, blending of sound spellings into words, and comprehension are essential

components of any reading program based on scientific research; and

Whereas reading instruction in most schools is still based on the whole language philosophy, often to the detriment of the students: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
2 *concurring)*, That it is the sense of Congress that—

3 (1) phonemic awareness followed by direct sys-
4 tematic phonics instruction should be used in all
5 schools as a first, and essential step in teaching a
6 student to read; and

7 (2) phonics instruction should be an integral
8 part of pre-service teaching requirements so that
9 teachers will have the skills to effectively teach read-
10 ing.

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